

A VOICE FROM HEAVEN:
A SERMON,

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE DEATH OF

Mrs. MARY W. BROWN,

WIFE OF REV. MATTHEW BROWN, D. D.,

PREACHED IN PROVIDENCE HALL, CANONSBURG,

MAY 6, 1838.

BY D. H. RIDDLE.

Pittsburgh:
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A VOICE FROM HEAVEN, &c.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.—Rev. 14:13.

The book of the Revelations clusters with wonders and glories. Here are scenes of transcendent interest, pourtrayed in the most exalted language. Here are visions given to the solitary exile of Patmos, such as never before or since were poured on the eye of mortals. Voices are heard, that sometimes interest, sometimes amaze, and sometimes overwhelm the beloved apostle. Manifestations of the divine glory are made, and glances into the inner scenery of eternity are permitted, which are too much for the physical frame of the privileged disciple, and he falls at his feet as dead. Here, at one time, heaven is opened, at another, the throne of God and its magnificent appendages are displayed. Again, the songs, the harpings of heavenly harpers, the seven-fold chorus of halleluias, and of celestial symphonies are heard; and then the whole eventful drama of earth's eventful history, passes in spiritual vision before the eyes of John. 'Tis not strange that this book should be interesting to the Christian; that with all its confessed mystery, and fathomless depths, many should desire to share in the blessing pronounced on those "who read and keep the prophecy of this book." Often has it cheered and comforted the saint amidst the darkness of his earthly pathway; and when, like its author, he was *in the spirit*, by its visions of brightness or its voices of blessing, it has hushed his sighs and dried up his tears. Probably no where in this book, possibly no where in the whole Bible, is there a voice more sweet and soothing, especially in circumstances of bereavement, when those we

loved are taken away, than that in the text. Nothing could so effectually prevent Christians, when sorrowing over departed friends, from "sorrowing as those who have no hope." We design to make this voice from heaven, the theme of our discourse at present, as commemorative of the death of the late Mrs. Brown. Our prayer will be answered and our desires gratified, if He who first spake it in the ears of the apostle, would bless its present consideration, for the comfort of the bereaved, and the edification and instruction of all.

We remark, from this passage in the first place, that *it contains an authoritative and explicit declaration of the immediate blessedness of those who die in the Christian faith.*

1st. It is an authoritative declaration. *It is a voice from Heaven.* Heaven is the presence and the palace of God, whence his oracles are given. Every voice from thence is truth without mixture of error, truth beyond the possibility of mistake, truth beyond the power of contradiction. A voice from heaven settles all doubts, clears up all perplexities, answers all objections, obviates all difficulties. "Thus saith the Lord," is the highest conceivable form of certainty, and the highest possible form of authority. He who says—"I am because I am," says, "blessed are the dead," and therefore *they are blessed*. Where is there authoritativeness comparable to a voice from Heaven: all human ideas of authoritativeness or certainty, are dim reflections of this.

2d. *It is an explicit declaration.* The voice of oracles, was often indistinct—the meaning dark and confused: The authority was unquestioned, but the intention inexplicable. So it is not here. It is *clear* as it is authoritative. There is no liability to misapprehension, or scarcely possibility of misconception. Oh! on the ear of the mourner, agitated by his grief—rendered incapable of abstruse reasoning by his sorrows—indisposed to rigid argument by his broken spirits—how clear and intelligibly sounds the voice from heaven, "blessed are the dead." The Christian recognizes the same voice that pronounced the beatitudes on the mount. It has the simplicity that suits the necessities of the mourner, the self-evidencing and self-interpreting plainness, that his spirit craves. It needs no in-

terpreter, but a quiet spirit. If all is still, and the soul is hushed, and faith waits and says, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak;" the voice from heaven bears its own interpretation, *blessed are the dead*. The dead—the loved, the lost, are happy. Here the question of the soul's existence after death is settled. That problem which engaged and baffled the profoundest minds of the heathen world, is here definitely, and incontrovertibly settled. The question which nature so instinctively proposes, at the gateway of the grave—the wish which seems connatural with our being, and strongest at its close—the longing after immortality, is here decisively met. "It is not all of life to live, nor all of death to die." We see them not—we hear them not,—sense gives us no evidence—reason gives us no assurance; but *they live*—they are *blessed*, says the voice from heaven. Faith *hears*, understands, and is satisfied. How often since the exile of John on Patmos, has humble piety, amidst its tears, been able to say, I heard a voice from heaven, saying, *blessed are the dead*.

3d. The voice from heaven pronounces authoritatively and clearly on the subject of *immediate blessedness*. In oracles of all kinds, eminently in oracles from heaven, and most of all when pertaining to interests so transcendent, every word is weighty and significant. The voice from heaven says, "*blessed are*," not shall be "*the dead*." When they die they are blessed: as soon as you call them the dead, you may call them also the blessed. As soon as sense, in sorrowing and desolating tones, says, *they are gone*, faith, with serenity and gratitude may say, *they are at rest*. When grief would burst out with the agonizing conclusion, *they are lost*, joy, even amidst tribulation's anguish hour, may say, *they are at home*. This settles the point, even if there were no other testimony in the voice from heaven. Possibly the Spirit meant to convey by the expression, *from henceforth*, that this would be eminently true, of some particular period of the Christian church, that from some special era of the church's history of toil and conflict, it would be more emphatically true that the dead would be blessed, but it seems quite natural and easy to understand it, in accordance with an idea we have suggested. From henceforth—from the article of death—from the moment of dissolution—

from the hour that closes the eye on the objects of earth, and shuts the ear to its music, and the voice of its friendships, and stills the tongue in uttering the words and feelings of human affection, and hushes the throb of the heart, and gathers the fixed marble of death over the once eloquent countenance, from that moment they *are blessed*. "Absent from the body, they are present with the Lord." To depart is to be with Christ. Loosed from mortal ties, disentangled from the earthly tenement, they are at home, in the bosom of God. Yea, "from henceforth," long before the body is deposited in its narrow dwelling place, this blessedness is begun. Long before the grass of spring shall have covered the consecrated spot where their ashes lie, and long before the keenness of sorrow shall have yielded to the touch of time, that blessedness shall have inconceivably brightened; and during the sorrowful years of separation, and onward through the lapse of future time, and of coming generations, and of earth's latest story, of her millenial brightness, her final fires, her succeeding purification; "yea, from henceforth," while God's throne lasts, and heaven's glories continue, that blessedness shall be uninterrupted, increasing and eternal.

The voice from heaven authoritatively and clearly declares the precious truth, that "the souls of believers at their death, do immediately pass into glory, while their bodies still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection."

4th. This voice from heaven authoritatively and clearly makes this declaration in *regard to all who die in the Christian faith*. Blessed are the dead, *who die in the Lord*. Not all who die are *blessed*. Death is not necessarily and invariably the passage to glory. The Bible encourages none of that latitudinarian feeling, so pleasing to the carnal mind, and so popular in the thoughtless world, which gives the blessedness of heaven, and the inheritance of saints, indiscriminately to all who go from the world, whatever be their character, or conduct, or principles. The voice from heaven speaks no such language; it endorses no such sentiments; it encourages no such delusion. By clearly defining the character of those who are blessed when they die, it authoritatively settles the point that those, and none but those, who die in the Lord are blessed when they die.

Death generally draws a veil over the unlovely features of human character, and human charity always hopes for those who are gone from the range of human judgment; but still, death only sets his seal of fixedness on existing character, and the dissolution of the body, of itself, works no regeneration of the heart. The voice from heaven speaks of a specific class of the dead; the dead that *die in the Lord*—that die in Christ—that die Christians, they are blessed.

To be in the Lord, or to be in Christ, for he is “both Lord and Christ,” is, in scripture language, to be a Christian; it is to be so in Christ, as to be one with him, in the enjoyment of the benefits of his redemption; so “joined to the Lord,” as to be “one spirit” with him in the prevalent disposition and temper of the mind. Those that are “found in him” “have not their own righteousness,” in regard to the foundation of their acceptance, but “the righteousness which is of God by faith.” But, at the same time, “they that are in Christ Jesus, walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.” To be in the Lord is to be justified by his atoning righteousness, imputed by the act of God, and sanctified by his Holy Spirit, implanted, and inworking in the soul.

This vital union to Christ, in the case of all who are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God,” is formed “by the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,” and is attested and certified by “the fruits of the Spirit” in the heart and life. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts.” “They mind the things of the Spirit.” They look not at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are unseen, which are eternal; and by these habits of heart, and “patient continuance in well doing,” they mature and develope the character of moral likeness to Christ, enstamped upon them, by the Spirit in the period of their new birth, and “grow up unto him in all things who is their head.” To be in Christ or in the Lord, in life, ensures the certainty of being in the Lord in death. They that live in the Lord shall die in the Lord. Thus, in regard to all who are in Christ, “whether they live or whether they die they are the Lord’s.” The union to Christ, “the Lord, both of the dead and the living,” is not a tem-

porary, dissoluble tie. Its continuance is not subject to caprice, or affected by vicissitudes. It is an eternal tie. Formed once, it is formed forever. "The gifts and callings of God are without repentance." "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." The covenant whereby God becomes a God unto his children, and they become his people, is "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." It provides for all possible contingencies, and secures infallibly all promised results.

Yes, if we live in the Lord, we shall die in the Lord. Whether, as in some cases, permitted joyfully and triumphantly to assure surviving friends of the blessed fact, lifting the song of praise and rapture, amidst and above the swellings of Jordan, or, as in other cases, (for these things are sovereignly and often to us mysteriously arranged by the Master) delirium veils the powers of the mind, from the view of mortal eyes, and shadows over with the mist of broken thought, the deep and quenchless exercises of the regenerated heart. The great and important fact, of *dying in the Lord* is secured; the comparatively minor circumstance of giving sensible evidence, and gratifying natural affection, in the final struggle, is disposed by the sovereign pleasure of "him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will." "A life of faith on the Son of God," ensures a death in the Lord. In regard to all, therefore, who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and united to the Lord by faith, and have formed a part of the invisible church on earth, and been incorporated into the mystical body of Christ, the voice from heaven gives us authoritative and incontrovertible assurance of a blessedness which begins at death and continues henceforth and forever. They that die in the Lord, "sleep in Jesus," and "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him." As certainly as we believe that Jesus rose from the dead and now reigns in glory, so certainly may we believe that the dead in the Lord, are blessed. True, in the interval between the day of burial and the day of the resurrection,

“Our cold remains in solitude,
Shall sleep the years away,”

but even in reference to the body, we have the blessed assurance, that being still united to Christ in the resurrection morning, “the bridal of the soul,” the triumphant spirit will come and put it on afresh, when made like unto his glorious body, and thus it shall be united in, and everlasting-ly enhance the blessedness of the believer.

II. We remark, on this passage, in the second place, *that this declaration was designed for the comfort and consolation of Christians in all future time.* It was to be written. “I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me *write*—blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.” Let this blessed truth be recorded, so that the eye of the mourner, dim with tears, in all future time, may read it and be comforted. It is in effect, as if the voice from heaven sounded down through the lapse of eighteen centuries, or as if, around every opened grave, where the remains of a believer were to be deposited, the voice from heaven were renewed.

“*It is written*,” and written for us, “for whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures,” or what is written, “might have hope.” God intended this voice of consolation to be perpetuated, and to bear its blessing wherever the Bible is scattered. It is written to be read whenever any of the family, in any clime or country, die in the Lord, and to be re-echoed as often as the loss which the church sustains in the removal of its members is recollected; or the breach which death makes in the circle of relatives or friends is regretted.

“*It is written*” to be believed, and that being believed, it may realize, as it were to our senses, the intimate relation between all the dead, who are in the Lord, and all the living who are in him also.

“The saints on earth, and all the dead,
But one communion make,
All join in Christ their living head,
And of his grace partake.

One army of the living God,
To his commands we bow:
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.”

The cloud of witnesses is always increasing. The ranks of the blessed are daily swelling. Heaven is ever, as it were, pressing more and more closely on earth, and doubling its attractions and fascinations as each new inhabitant, endeared to us by friendship and affection, and familiar to our hearts almost as their own throbings, enter on its blessedness and invite us to their company.

III. We remark, that this passage *intimates to us some of the characteristics of true Christians.* They are active, and their works are permanently useful. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may "rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." In thus designating the peculiar privilege of the departed after death, the text gives their peculiar characteristic in life. To a believer, death is rest from labor, and after death his works follow or remain after him in their influence and results.

Those who die in the Lord and are blessed when they die, have been in life engaged in *labors.* "Their labors." This seems to indicate that labor belong to Christians—that Christians are characteristically active. We do not assert too much when we say, that the Bible warrants the idea that practical Christianity is a life of labor for Christ, upon evangelical motives, and with a view to the glory of God. The kinds of labor are various, and suited to the varied characters and temperaments and peculiar habits of different Christians. There are eyes, and ears, and feet, and hands in the body of Christ. Each member has its own peculiar office, but some kind of work is done by all. The theatre of labor to some is outward, and their qualifications specially adapt them for such a sphere of duty. Some labor within, because they are fitted only for such scenes. Some tell directly by every effort in the interests of visible piety, and sensibly move forward the cause of religion by their whole course of action; others work at a distance and often in the shade; their influence is so indirect and impalpable, that it is not generally recognized, and often disregarded. To the eye of sense their labors hardly deserve the name, while yet they may be really and powerfully, and abidingly, advancing the cause of Christ, and the interests of piety. Whatever may be their varieties, genuine Christians are all characterized by labors. Whatever may be the estimate on earth, every genuine Christian

“Has many a record in that book,
 By angels writ with beams of heavenly light,
 On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
 A chronicle of actions fair and bright.”

It would be well if this characteristic of genuine Christianity were fairly understood, and its legitimate connexion with the evidence of personal piety, were properly adjusted. There is unquestionably a spurious piety which expends itself entirely in action, and has no living spring in the soul. There is such a thing as substituting mere feverish restlessness, and mechanical activity for true Christianity; but, at the same time, it is very possible also to substitute the mere poetry of religion, its secluded musings, its luscious sensibilities, its imaginative abstractions, and unsocial austerities, for the piety of the Bible. The religion of Christ is equally opposed to either extreme. Its genuine subjects, labor, and labor constantly and abundantly, but their labors spring from inward principles, and the secret of their energy is habitual communion with God and with truth. We are never to imagine that actual and constant labor is not demanded by our Master, and indispensable to our symmetrical piety, because the activity of some has degenerated into excess and fanaticism. We are not to shrink into cloisters, and indulge in everlasting and slothful lamentations over misguided zeal, even though it should be painfully frequent, but we are to labor with the right spirit, to show that there can be activity without self-confidence, and abundant labors for God along with that lovely humility of soul and unostentatious self-forgetfulness which so sweetly remind the beholder of Him who, though “he pleased not himself,” yet “went about doing good.” Of all Christians it should be truly said at death—“*They rest from their labors.*”

Another characteristic of true Christians here intimated, is, *their permanent usefulness*. “Their works do follow them,” or remain after them. The labors of Christians are not lost. The results of Christian activity are not transient. The good they do lives after them. This is true, either of the actual results of their works, or their enshinement in the memory of surviving friends. The works of Christians survive them in their actual results. The sinner turned from the error of his way by the friend-

ly counsel of a faithful Christian, often lives to extend his influence, and even to preach the unsearchable riches of the gospel, long after the tongue that warned or wooed him is stilled in death. He may convey to hundreds and thousands, and they to thousands more, the knowledge of the truth, when the soul that led him to Jesus has long rested from its labors, amidst the blessedness of Heaven. The peace and happiness of a family, whose head has been rescued from intemperance or other vice, by the faithful and repeated counsels of a persevering Christian, may remain and be the subject of thankfulness and admiration, long after the heart that poured forth its solicitudes and its warning, has ceased to throb with mortal anxieties. The Sabbath scholar, in whose heart the pious instructions of her teacher never took root during her life, may, after many days, rise up and call her blessed, as the instrument, under God, of her salvation, and be the honored instrument of the same benefits to others. The minister or the missionary, who has been assisted by the openhanded benevolence of a principled Christian, may be pointing the dying heathen to the Lamb of God, when the friend of his youth may be beholding Him, face to face, in glory, beyond the scene of actual labors for the souls of men. As the weeping survivors of Dorcas, "shewed the coats and garments she had made while yet with them", so the friends of those who rest in death after the labors of life, may point to many monuments of their works treasured in the hearts or manifested in the happiness or usefulness of those whom they have benefitted. Yes, the result of Christian labors is permanent and self-perpetuating. Feeble and almost unnoticed in its beginnings, it often goes on from generation to generation, increasing its circle of influence and blessing. To adopt the beautiful simile of the Saviour, though in its commencement like a grain of mustard seed, which is the least of all seeds, it becomes, in the end, a great tree, and the birds dwell in the branches thereof. Oh! how immensely stimulating to Christian fidelity is this view of the results of Christian labors! No doubt the vivid perception and strong conviction of this, enters essentially into the elements of energetic Christian character. It is the philosophy of that zeal which always abounds in the

work of the Lord and of that holy economy that permits no hour, nay, no moment to go to eternity, unwinged by some deed of benevolence, or aspiration of holiness.

“*Their works do follow them.*” The world at this day feels the results of the labors of Paul, and will feel them till the winding up of its eventful story. The church feels now and will feel in the day of her millennial glory, the results of Luther’s life. American piety, and zeal, and benevolence, as well as Pagan darkness and gloom, feel the effects of the brief but brilliant and blessed career of Samuel J. Mills. Till Asia with her millions are all converted to God, how many thousands will thrill with unutterable emotions at the name and simple story of Harriet Newell? And many humbler thousands will find out for the first time at the bar of God, how many of their works have followed them to glory, and served to gild their eternal crown, or increase their ineffable felicity.

The works of Christians survive them in the memory of friends. “The memory of the just is blessed;” yea, “the righteous,” the active and laborious Christian, “shall be in everlasting remembrance.” This is the promise and provision of God’s word, which the history of his providence fully redeems. It is as delightfully true, as the connected assertion is awfully true of the contrasted character, “*the name of the wicked shall rot.*” Of every good deed done by the Christian, every want relieved, or sorrow assuaged, or counsel given, or succor rendered, when viewed through the hallowing medium which death brings around the character, it may be said, in the beautiful language of the prophet, “the memorial thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon,” pleasant as a cordial and exhilarating to the spirits. Often after the grave has entombed the benefactor or the counseil or, the friend and the comforter, these things brighten strangely in our memories. A word or even a look, expressive of a noble spirit, or an action indicating those elevated principles of conduct, which are worthy of imitation, will live with freshness in the soul’s consecrated recollections, and, at some critical moment, its power may decide the choice for life or the character for eternity. We live thus for others, while we live, and we may thus live

in the hearts of others, even when we are dead. The example of piety may preach the affectionate counsel, even from the grave, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ." Thus often

"The sweet remembrance of the just,
Like a green root revives and bears,
A train of blessings for their heirs,
When dying nature sleeps in dust."

"Their works do follow them," enshined in the memory of friends and reproduced by the power of imitation. Thus, from generation to generation, God makes provision along the channels of human feeling and natural affection, that specimens of active and lovely piety should be transmitted, and that besides the blessedness of resting from labors, in the peace of heaven, the believer should have the blessedness of leaving in the hearts of many on earth, the living monuments of good works. This is God's covenant; "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." Piety shall be carried down from age to age, and character shall transmit itself to the latest generation. Often the Christian feels as if he is laboring in vain, and spending his strength for nought, but he should remember this part of the gracious economy of God's providence. His works, if done from right motives, and through imparted grace, even if they should not have visible results in life, will follow him after death. God will take care to enshrine them where they will not be lost, and make them abundantly productive to his glory. There are "fleshly tables of the heart," which God's Spirit can make susceptible of impressions from our example, as well as the depositories of our principles, and the subject of our direct efforts. No work done for God will be lost. No labor expended for the amelioration of society, the preservation of morals, the advancement of piety, or the defence of truth, shall be left orphanless, in this dark world where it has been put forth. A lifetime of such labor, regulated by the great principles of truth and duty, shall be followed by great results. In the heaven where the Christian rests from his labors, and in whose light all

things are seen in their true connexion, from time to time; he will find his works following him, and the covenant of God renewedly ratified.

We have designed the illustration of this subject for consolation and edification, in view of the recent death of Mrs. Brown, and no doubt, as we have traced the several topics, the mental application by those who knew the deceased, has been made, so as almost, in their case, to obviate the necessity of any further remark. The evidence we have that she was in the Lord in life, the reason for our hope that she died in the Lord, and the grounds for our consolation that now she is blessed, resting from her labors while her works do follow her, are all such as to make the theme we have been considering, peculiarly appropriate to our present circumstances. We have reason to believe that she was a Christian, united by regeneration of her heart and justification of her person, to the Lord Jesus Christ, in the everlasting covenant. We have the most delightful evidence that she was an active, energetic, workdoing Christian. Her labors were abundant, systematic, and untiring. Her works, in their results, and in the memory of her friends, still remain. Ought not the voice from heaven to console us while we weep over her removal? It assures us of her immediate and everlasting blessedness: that she lives and is happy in her Father's house, and the home of her soul. And ought not the power of her example, to urge us to attain the same activity and energy of Christian character, to leave behind us when we die, as sweet and fragrant a memorial of good works, and as lasting monuments of labors? The death of friends, as every other dispensation of Providence, ought thus to be improved, as no doubt for this purpose it is intended.

"For us they sicken, and for us they die,
And shall they sicken, shall they die in vain?"

With a view to this improvement, we invite you, in the conclusion, to a brief sketch of the life and character of our departed friend.

MARY WILLIAMINA FERGUSON was the only daughter of Major William Ferguson, who was slain in the defeat of St. Clair. She was born in 1791, in the city of Philadelphia, being an infant at the time of her father's death. He never saw her, and probably never knew of her birth.

She resided till her eighth year, in Philadelphia, and afterwards, upon the marriage of her mother to Col. Beatty, at Princeton, N. J. During her early education, she was under the tuition of several teachers, and, among others, of Mr. Adrian, since celebrated as a mathematician. At eighteen she, for the first time, crossed the mountains, on horseback, (then an adventurous journey), in company with her step father, Col. Beatty. From his conversation and attention in pointing out every thing to her notice, she acquired those habits of close observation, which ever after characterized her, and which rendered her so remarkable and interesting in conversation. About this period, her first saving impressions of religion began, and what is worthy of remark, as illustrating at once the sovereignty of God, and the peculiarity of her character, she was led to seek a portion in God by the prospect of becoming possessed of a very large worldly property. She first turned her affections towards heaven, when she was most of all flattered and caressed in society. Alarmed at the thought of having no other portion but this world, she had no rest till she found, as she hoped, an interest in an "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

The property she inherited from her father was of such a kind, and so situated as to require vigilant attention, and constant care. This fact occasioned those habits of regularity and system, and that tact for business, and probably laid the foundation for that characteristic energy which marked her whole life, which were carried out in every thing she did, and shone eminently in her religious character.

In the year 1818 she was married to the Rev. Backus Wilbur, and immediately removed with him to Dayton, Ohio, the field of his ministerial labors. She entered at once and with all her soul, on various plans of usefulness, as a pastor's wife, and soon won for herself the esteem and affection of the church, and helped to raise their expectations of great results from the settlement of their pastor among them. But these plans were all arrested in the very bud of their promise, and her efforts were all suspended by the lamented death of her husband, after the lapse of a few months from their marriage, and of four weeks from his ordination. Left thus a widow—a clergy-

man's widow—amidst comparative strangers, and in a new country, her characteristic energy did not forsake her in this critical and trying period. Though stunned by the blow, and bleeding in heart over the desolation it wrought, she manifested resignation and submission to the hand that gave it. She turned her face homewards and left the scene where she had fondly hoped to spend years of usefulness, in tears, yet trusting in God, and at no period in her whole life did her piety shine more distinctly and attractively, than when thus mellowed by the darkness of her youthful tribulation. After returning to Princeton, the place of her former duties, she maintained the character of active piety, and exerted the influence of her vigorous mind in various modes of doing good, ever foremost among "those women" that, like Paul's sisters, "labored in the gospel," and in their allotted sphere, till her marriage with Dr. Brown, in 1825. By that event she was brought into a new and important sphere as the wife of the president of this College. Her mind, and heart, and energies, now found an ample field of usefulness. Here the last thirteen years of her life were spent, and the vigor of her powers were expended. Here she labored, and this is the theatre of her works. I need not say how well she filled this sphere of responsible duty. How incessant her anxieties and important her exertions for the welfare of the college, in those particulars which came within the appropriate sphere of her influence. You know how steadfastly she labored in the Sabbath School, and particularly in the Infant School, while bodily health allowed: how zealously she started or co-operated in all the plans of reform in the village: how untiringly she visited the sick, counselled the perplexed, assisted the needy, encouraged the timid, and stimulated the desponding. The poor knew and loved her. The sick student, and the bereaved fathers of the dying, can testify of her kindness and fidelity. Many a youth who resided in the institution, will long remember her, and some dear brethren who once shared the hospitality of her board, and the pleasure of daily intercourse with her, and are now far off among the Gentiles, will not soon forget her friendship, her conversation, her example and her counsels. She wore away the prejudices which many at first conceived, by the manifestation of her

principled conduct. By her dignified deportment and hospitable manner, she gained the confidence of the trustees of the institution, she secured the affections of the professors, the respect and admiration of the students, and the grateful recollection of the passing stranger who visited the college, or who shone in the scenes of a commencement. And there is one heart that in wandering over the study, the garden, and the shrubbery, will meet multiplied and affecting memorials of her system and order, her devotion to the little things that make up the comfort of domestic life, and alleviate the cares and responsibilities of a public station, and the oft ill requited solicitudes of a public servant: every day, and every new vicissitude of duty, will associate her virtues and his loss. Every one seemed to think her place exactly filled, and her sphere precisely suited. But whilst thus filling up her round of duties, and at a period when the mind and body are in their prime, she became the victim of disease. Originating, as it is supposed, in the spine, it assumed towards the close, the decided symptoms of *phthisis pulmonalis*. For two years past, and especially during the last winter, her sufferings were great. Though, under eminent medical treatment in Philadelphia she rallied after the first attack, so much as to give her friends the hope of her entire recovery, yet, during the last winter, the disease entrenched itself more deeply, and sapped gradually the powers of life. Towards the close, she enjoyed a merciful exemption from very acute suffering, and manifested a very decided growth in sanctification. She ripened amidst the fires of affliction for the purity of heaven. The rational exercise of her mind, immediately previous to her departure, was not allowed her. Delirium threw its cloud over the manifestations of her cultivated intellect, and her ripened piety. The fond anticipations of her friends in reference to her triumphant passage over Jordan, and even the anxious and natural desire for a lucid hour for the final farewell, and the conscious separation, and the parting blessing, were disappointed. But long before that period, she had talked of death as a familiar thing. She had made all her earthly arrangements for his arrival. She had held sweet, and frequent, and satisfactory intercourse with her friends,

in reference to her future prospects. "The chamber where she met her end was often privileged beyond the walks of common life," and amidst the solemn discourses about the glory of Christ, and the preciousness of his salvation, was felt to be "close on the verge of heaven." She gave blessed evidence that her record was on high, her anchor within the veil, and she waited patiently for the summons whenever and however it might come to her. Sense might have been gratified, but faith could not have been increased by any farther evidence. Death came to her at last in a solemn form, and the last struggle, though probably not really very painful, was distressingly protracted. Her friends continued for fourteen hours, at the ever darkening post of observation, watching for the closing moment. But at last the strained ear missed the gradually weakening moan, the pause of pulsation, and the hushed respiration of a weeping group around her couch, announced that she was gone, and she slept calmly in Jesus and rested from her labors. "*She died in the Lord.*"

I can hardly trust myself to sketch the character of the departed. To the tie of relationship there is added, in my case, the feeling of intimate and endeared friendship, for she always treated me as a son and a friend. Many and very pleasant have been the hours of our Christian and friendly intercourse, and on many occasions, and in reference to many topics, we have mingled our feelings together. If I should fail it would be from too high a regard for her virtues, rather than too little knowledge of her character. It is not for eulogy, but to glorify God in her, that it is attempted at all. Her excellencies have made a lasting impression on my mind, while the deficiencies or excrescences of character which might arrest a stranger's eye, now especially through the hallowing medium of death, are, in a great measure, hid from mine.

The most striking peculiarity of our departed friend, was her superior intellect and strong common sense. Her mind was strikingly vigorous, and, in many respects, even masculine. There was more of logic than of poetry in her composition. All her susceptibilities were for the practical, rather than the contemplative. Her judgment was superior to her imagination, and there was more of strength than of tenderness in the whole contour of her character.

With an unprepossessing exterior and manners, not always attractive at first sight, those who knew her slightly scarcely ever appreciated her sterling qualities. She generally impressed herself more deeply on the mind and heart, in proportion to closer intimacy. She was firm, and even somewhat fastidious in her friendship, steadfast and unhesitating in her preferences of persons and things. She had superior energy, great system, and untiring perseverance. She was unswerving and uniform in all her principles; decided in the adoption of her views of truth, and in the discharge of supposed duty. *She was remarkably conscientious.* Her rigid conscientiousness, both in regard to the utterance of truth and discharge of duty, sometimes made her seem untender; for a sense of duty disentangled her mind from any reference almost to any other reasons of conduct. This gave occasionally an aspect of ruggedness to her virtue, which it was easier to admire, than to enjoy. If she erred here at all, it was the common error of decided minds, a self-conscious sense of the rectitude of her motives, without an over careful regard to the effect of her conduct, and possibly an undue reliance on her own judgment, with sometimes a too great disregard of that of others.

She was very benevolent; her benevolence was principled, systematic, uniform and very great. She never hoarded any thing; as a young lady, a wife and a widow, she always expended her whole income beyond self-support, in the different plans of benevolence. She was not a woman of impulses. Her benevolence was regulated by strict knowledge of the cause to which she gave. Her generosity never precluded a full investigation of the case that demanded her assistance. She would not and she did not give to an institution where she believed the disbursement would not be judiciously made, and her charity was never given where she thought it would not be advantageously expended. While she was most scrupulously exact in all her business transactions, she had none of that niggardliness and lust of lucre that sometimes tarnish the character of those who possess great system and order of mind. What she thought of money other than as a means of usefulness, may be inferred from the fact that she consented to compromise a suit in law,

where the amount involved was immense, and her prospects according to law and actual adjudication were most flattering, because she saw something significant in the dealings of Providence in regard to it. When it seemed to say, "seek not great things for thyself," she sought them not.

She was characteristically an active, rather than a contemplative Christian. She had in her religion and in her creed, more of obedience than of sentiment. Whilst she was regular and conscientious in her devotional habits, she was often laboring whilst others were praying, and was engaged in works while they were indulging in groans or dissolved in tears. "She loved" emphatically, "not in word," nor in mere feeling, "but in deed."

Her doctrinal views were clear and settled, and Calvinistic. She loved and was fed by the doctrines of grace, and steadily preferred the church of her adoption, but she "followed after charity," and loved the image of Christ, and the faithful workman in the vineyard, and rejoiced in revivals of religion, and the upbuilding of the kingdom of Christ, and the furtherance of the gospel amidst the heathen, without reference to distinctive peculiarities of plans and measures. She deeply deplored, and sometimes bitterly wept over, the alienations and agitations of these last days of the church. Few knew as well as the speaker, how deeply her soul was afflicted by these things, and how fervently she prayed for the peace of Jerusalem, when the watchmen would see again, eye to eye, and "*together lift up their voices and sing,*" over the length and breadth of a renovated church. Her relations in this respect, and the duties growing out of them, gave occasion to some of the most delicate and decisive manifestations of piety, and contributed eminently to her personal sanctification.

She had also very clear speculative views of the privileges of the New Testament believer. She regarded very highly the emancipative power of the gospel, and always lamented that "the adaptive cheerfulness of children," was not more generally exemplified by professing Christians. While her views of her own personal unworthiness were full and scriptural, though she saw nothing in herself but what she was ashamed of, and always disclaimed her

works as having the slightest share in her justification before God, and distinctly rested all her hope on the work and merit of Christ, her views of the privileges, the peace, the joys secured by the new covenant, were distinct and delightful. She never manifested, even when consciously descending the vale of death, any exalted raptures, but there was something refreshing in the calmness and tranquility which settled over her character, and marked her exercises till she ceased to be conscious. To this result, the influence of the peculiar views we have alluded to greatly contributed, and their excellence and accuracy were beautifully tested and strongly commended by such an influence in these honest hours.

She had remarkably judicious views of the relative position and influence of females. She was herself a highly gifted female, adapted by native strength of mind and cultivated intellect, to exert a powerful influence, and take a prominent station amidst her sex. She was always the fast friend of female education, and eminent mental cultivation, but she eschewed from her heart the doctrines of *pantisocracy*, or rebellion against relative inequality, broached recently, and defended strongly by some of her sex; she unfeignedly loathed all such wars against providential wisdom, and such confusion of the separate spheres and duties of the sexes. She wished and she loved to see woman filling and adorning woman's sphere, and thought her in the orbit of her glory when she patiently went on in the path of her duty.

If our friend had any special attachments to instrumentalities of usefulness, it might be said that she loved, with an especial love, the cause of foreign missions, and of an educated ministry. The museum in her late residence would announce, even to a stranger, that he was in the house of a friend to missions, and there are many in the ministry who can testify to her practical regard to the cause of an educated ministry.

And finally, though so strikingly active in all her habits, she was a patient sufferer. "Patience," through years of bodily suffering, had room for "her perfect work," and she grew in this grace till the last. Her friends were often agreeably cheered during the days and weeks of her entire confinement, by the pleasant radiations of her countenance

and her well known smile of satisfaction. Even amidst delirium her wanderings were pleasant, sometimes even joyous, indicating the habit of her mind.

Death, in her case, sundered many tender ties. It took an only daughter from a venerable mother, an only sister from an affectionate brother, a mother from an only and almost infant daughter, a wife from a husband, going down the vale of years, a friend from an extended circle, and was moreover emphatically the King of Terrors, yet she felt that to die was gain, though to live was, on many accounts, pleasant and desirable.

Such was our friend, and such, only, with all her imperfections removed, and all her excellencies brightened, and the refinement of heaven given to all the graces of earth, and the direct intuition of Jesus added to all the dim reflections of his image here, she is now amidst the rest and blessedness of the skies. Such, after years of separation have wrought their mysterious changes upon her spirit and upon our character, we hope to see her again, when, if we are in Christ, some heart shall pronounce over our cold remains, "the voice from heaven says, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Amen.

